

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS**

MS NYDIA M. VELAZQUEZ, CHAIRWOMAN

MADAM CHAIRWOMAN: DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS, IT'S LIKE A DREAM COME TRUE FOR A SHARE CROPPERS DAUGHTER FROM SOUTH ALABAMA TO BE IN THIS BUILDING AND IN THE PRESENTS OF SUCH AN ELITE GROUP OF DEDICATED AMERICANS, I AM SO HUMBLLED AND OVERWHELMED. THIS COULD HAPPEN ONLY IN AMERICA. TO BE ASK TO TESTIFY TO THIS COMMITTEE UNDER THE 'HEROES OF SMALL BUSINESS'. IS SUCH AN HONOR. MCCLAIN CONTRACTING COMPANY, INC. IS A SMALL WOMAN-OWNED, NATIVE AMERICAN-OWNED CONSTRUCTION COMPANY LOCATED IN THE SOUTHEAST ALABAMA TOWN OF ANDALUSIA. THE CORPORATION IS OWNED BY ME AND MY SON KEVIN MCCLAIN.

THE COMPANY GOT ITS START IN 1990 AS MCCLAIN MOTORS, INC. D.B.A. MCCLAIN YAMAHA; A YAMAHA DEALERSHIP THAT SOLD AND SERVICED ATV'S AND WATER CRAFTS UNTIL 1996, THE DEALERSHIP WAS SOLD AND IN 1997 THE NAME OF THE CORPORATION WAS CHANGED TO MCCLAIN CONTRACTING COMPANY, INC. THE COMPANY BECAME A GENERAL CONTRACTOR LICENSED BY THE STATE OF ALABAMA. WE HAD ACHIEVED SOME SUCCESS, AND HAD WON SOME CONTRACTS ON ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS IN ALABAMA, BUT IT WAS TOUGH TO FIND REGULAR WORK. OUR WORK FORCE CONSISTED OF ME, MY SON AND 4 EMPLOYEES.

SOMETIMES THE ONLY RECOURSE TO LAYING OFF OUR WORK FORCE WAS TO GO TO THE BANK AND BORROW MONEY TO MAKE THE PAYROLL SO OUR VALUABLE EMPLOYEES COULD TAKE THEIR WAGES HOME TO MEET THEIR OBLIGATIONS. WE DID THIS WITHOUT HESITATION BECAUSE WE HAVE ALWAYS TRIED TO TREAT OUR EMPLOYEES LIKE FAMILY. WE HAD TO DO WHAT WAS FAIR FOR THEM.

I WAS NOT CONTENT AND DECIDED TO PURSUE OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. I WAS AWARE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT COULD BE AVAILABLE TO OUR COMPANY IN THIS DIRECTION. I CONTACTED THE TROY UNIVERSITY SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER (SBDC) FOR ASSISTANCE. COUNSELORS WITH THE TROY SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER FIRST MET WITH ME AND MY SON IN OCTOBER OF 2004. I BEGAN THE PROCESS OF APPLYING FOR 8 (A) AND HUBZONE CERTIFICATION SHORTLY AFTERWARDS. MUCH OF MY TIME IN 2004 AND 2005 (14 MONTHS) WAS SPENT WORKING THROUGH THE EXHAUSTING AND FRUSTRATING 8(A) AND HUBZONE CERTIFICATION PROCESSES. I WAS CERTIFIED 8(A) BY THE U S SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION SEPTEMBER 15, 2005.

IT WASN'T LIKE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SUDDENLY STARTED HANDING OVER WORK- FAR FROM IT. BUT CERTIFICATION WAS THE BEST THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO OUR FAMILY AND OUR EMPLOYEES' FAMILIES. AFTER MARKETING TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FOR 11 MONTHS, I NEGOTIATED MY FIRST FEDERAL CONTRACT AUGUST 24, 2006 WITH KESSLER AIR FORCE BASE, BILOXI, MS. THE CONTRACT WAS CALLED SABER (SIMPLIFIED ACQUISITION OF ENGINEERING REQUIREMENTS). WHICH WAS A ON-CALL SERVICE AT THE AIR FORCE BASE TO DO OOD-JOBS, THINGS LIKE FIXING AND REPLACING AIR CONDITIONERS, PLUMBING, BUILDING REMODELING. THE CONTRACT WAS FOR 1 YEAR. WE COMPLETED THE CONTRACT IN 4 MONTHS; THE CONTRACTING OFFICER WAS SO PLEASED WITH THE QUALITY OF OUR WORK, OUR ABILITY TO MEET OUR COMMITMENTS THAT I NEGOTIATED ANOTHER CONTRACT.

BELIEVE ME THINGS HAVEN'T BEEN THE SAME SINCE. OUR REPUTATION SPREAD TO OTHER NEARBY FEDERAL INSTALLATIONS LIKE THE NAVY SEEBEE BASE IN GULFPORT AND THE VA HOSPITAL IN BILOXI AWARDING US

CONTRACTS. SOON WE BEGAN TO EXPAND BEYOND OUR SUCCESS IN MISSISSIPPI AND SECURED CONTRACTS IN THE FLORIDA PANHANDLE. WE HAVE COMPLETED \$24,400,000.00 OF CONTRACTS FOR FEDERAL AGENCIES SUCH AS THE AIR FORCE, THE NAVY, THE ARMY CORP OF ENGINEERS, THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION AND THE GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION.

I AM GREATFUL MORE THAN WORDS CAN EXPRESS.

WE NOW HAVE 31 FULL TIME EMPLOYEES, OUR STRENGTH LIES WITH OUR EMPLOYEES, AND WE COULD NOT DO WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT THEM.

THE SUCCESS OF OUR BUSINESS IS DUE TO HARD WORK AND DEDICATION OF OUR PERSONNEL, AND I ALSO GIVE MUCH OF THE CREDIT OF OUR BUSINESS SUCCESS TO THE STAFF AT THE TROY SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER AND THE SBA OFFICE IN BIRMINGHAM FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE IN HELPING ME APPLY FOR THE SBA CERTIFICATION.

I AM FEELING REALLY GOOD ABOUT OUR RECENT SUCCESS, BUT I AM NOT CONTENT TO ENJOY IT WITHOUT EXPRESSING AN INTEREST IN SHARING MY STORY TO HELP OTHERS WHO MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO GIVE UP WHEN THING GET TOUGH.

“WE HAVE ALL HEARD THE COMMENT THAT I AM FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND I AM HERE TO HELP YOU”, THIS IS REALLY TRUE WITH THE U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, THE PERSONNEL, THE DIFFERENT PROGRAMS AND TRAINING AVAILABLE TO HELP ANYONE TO SUCCEED IN THE BUSINESS

WORLD IS AVAILABLE FOR THE ASKING. "DON'T GIVE UP, DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP, HELP OTHERS ANYTIME YOU CAN".

IN ALABAMA 97% OF EMPLOYMENT IS BY SMALL BUSINESS, THIS MEANS WE REALLY NEED MR. TOM TODT, AND HIS STAFF AT THE ALABAMA DISTRICT OFFICE OF THE U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION IN BIRMINGHAM, AL.

ONLY IN AMERICA AND WITH GRACE OF GOD COULD SOME ONE LIKE ME HAVE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HELP AND THE CHANCE TO HELP OTHERS.

IN CLOSING, I WANT TO THANK EACH OF YOU FOR THE SUPPORT YOU GIVE THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION. YOU TOUCH SO MANY LIVES ALL OVER THE U.S. THRU THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION.